

John Lyle  
and  
Lyle Farm

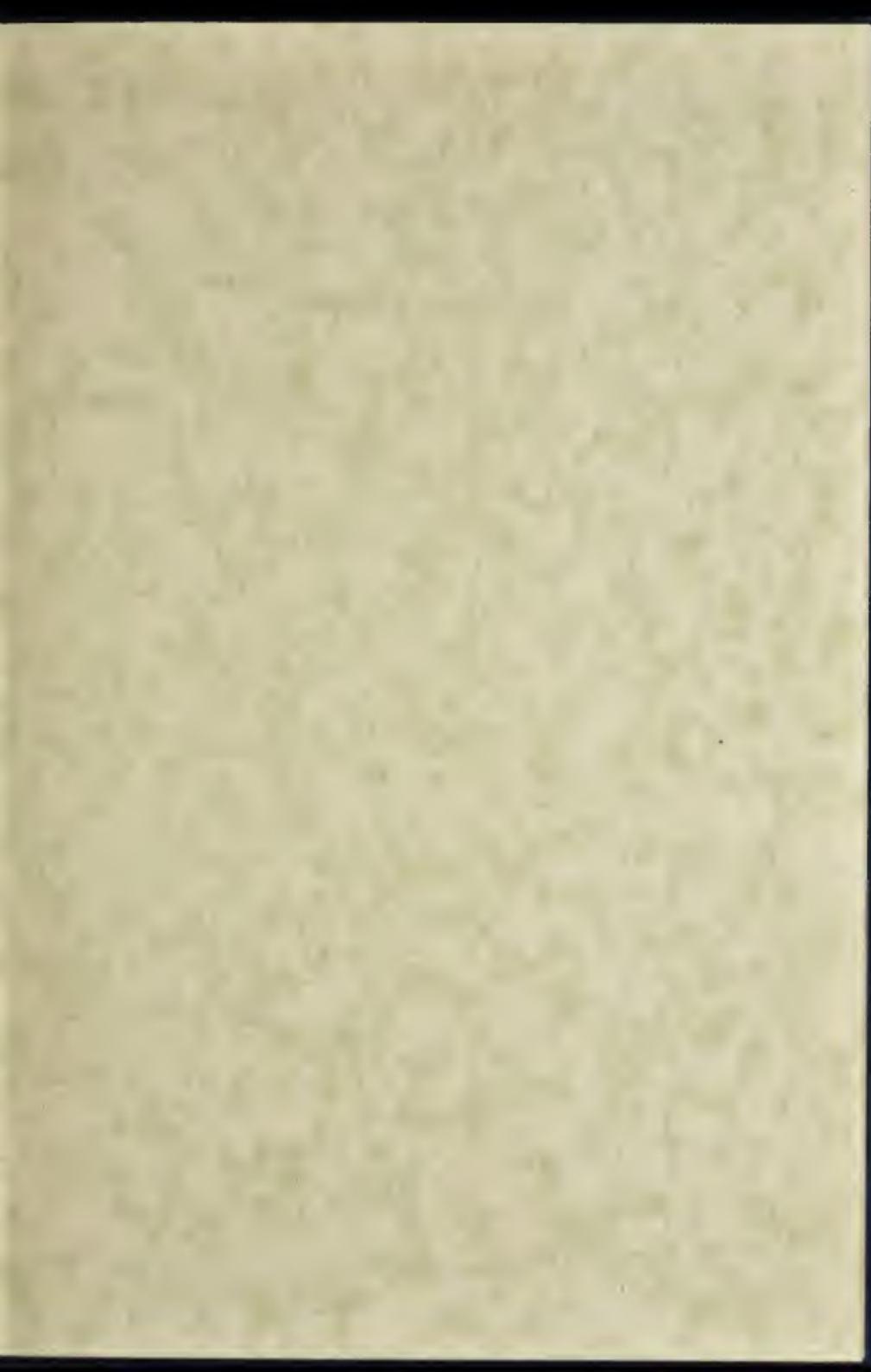
Julia Veasie Glen

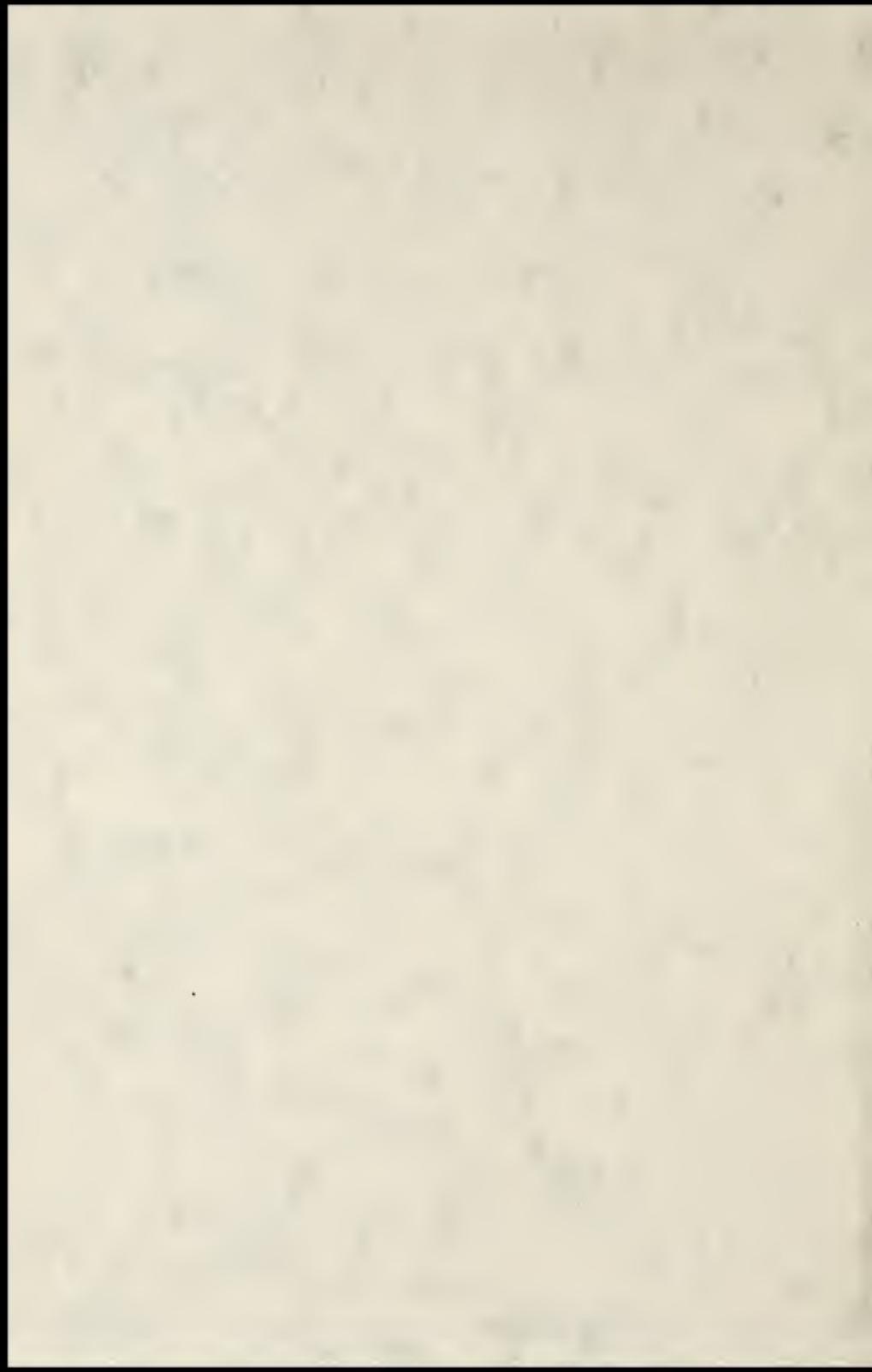


The Newberry Library

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The Everett D. Graff Collection  
of Western Americana

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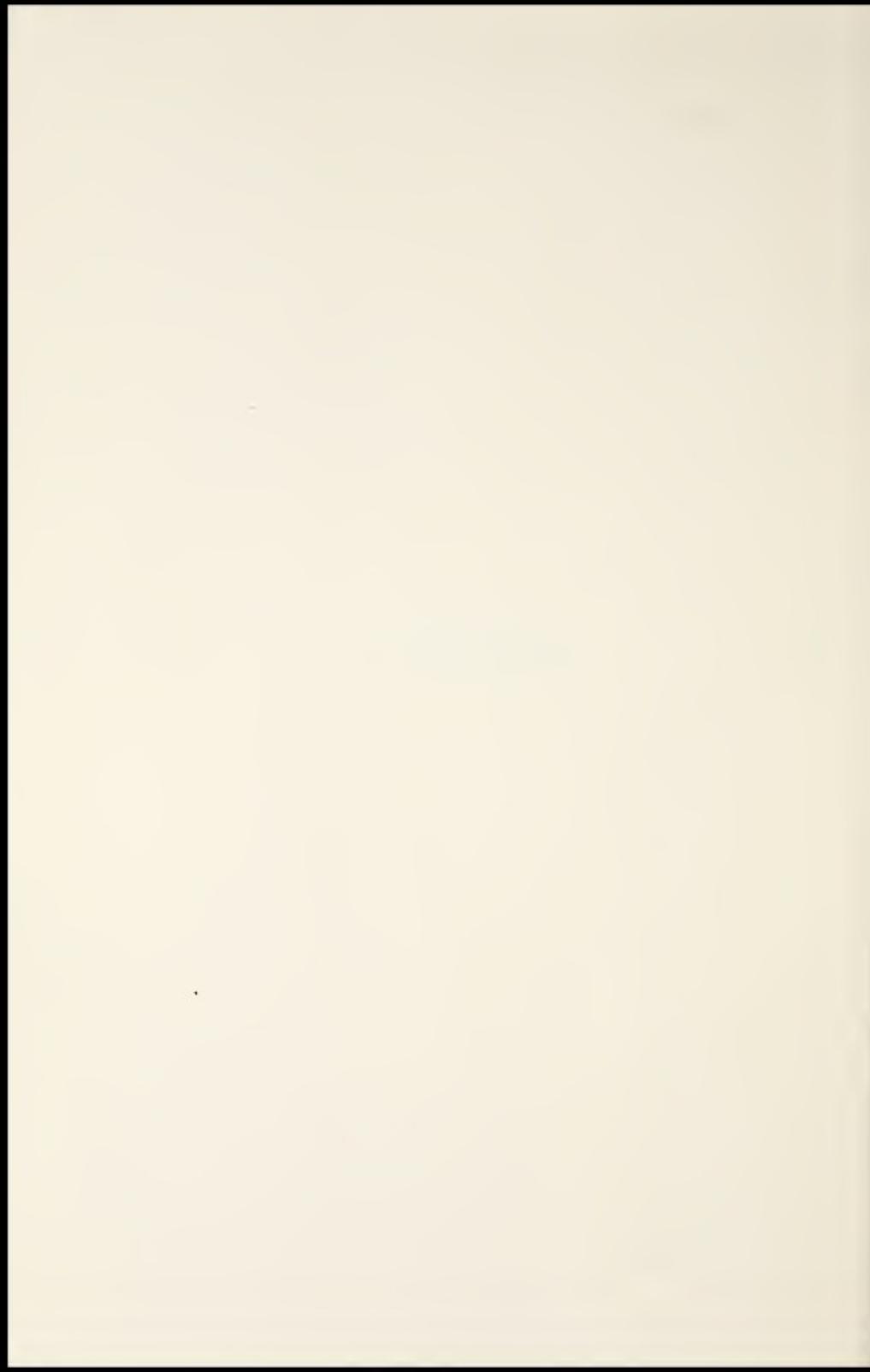
# John Lyle and Lyle Farm

Julia Veazie Glen

1925



To My Mother  
Harriet Lyle Veazie







Lyle House



Front door of Lyle house



## JOHN LYLE AND LYLE FARM

Travelers along Ellendale Lane are familiar with the house among spreading old trees at the corner where the road turns away from Salem into Dallas. Few know that belated passersby have been cheered by lights in those tall windows since 1858.

In that summer John Eakin Lyle saw his vision of an Oregon home take dignified and hospitable shape. He planned spacious grounds about the house. In front he placed silver poplars, on the south English walnut trees. From the native woods he brought firs and maples with which he planted a grove on the north.

Three years later, slender, erect, smiling, he walked down the graveled path never to return. It was a long time ago and few remember him but the home, a deed of gift, some yellowed old records still exist and leave no doubt as to John Lyle's way of dealing with the social, spiritual and economic problems of his day.

The Lyles came from Ireland to America. Three brothers, Matthew, John and Daniel, with a nephew Samuel Lyle, came from near Larne on the Irish coast in the County of Antrim, about 1740 and settled in the Colony of Virginia on Timber Ridge in what is now Rockbridge County. At the time of their residence near Larne it was said to be a settlement—"all Presbyterian and Scotch, not one natural Irish in the Parish." The time of the migration of the Lyles from Scotland to Ireland is placed at about 1606. William Robertson, author of "Historical Tales and Legends of Ayrshire," says: "The Lyles are a very old family. Old enough to have a wraith. That is, a duplicate of the head of the house who came to warn some relative that the master, or Lord, was about to die. The ballad 'Lord Lyle' is founded on Ayrshire traditions."

John Eakin Lyle was a direct descendant of Daniel Lyle and through a marriage of cousins, also of John Lyle. He was born in 1815, a son of William Lyle who married Jane Eakin and located in Blount County, Tennessee. Upon the death of Lyle's parents an uncle, John Eakin, took the lad to his own home near Knoxville, gave him a father's affection and supervised a careful education. To him John Lyle was indebted for a college training which he put to immediate use in teaching.

His life was cut off before he had leisure to write the story of the migration to Oregon as he doubtless would have done in later years. That he was not actuated primarily by the desire for land is manifest for he made no haste to secure a donation land claim. Incentives, however, were plenty. He could scarcely have escaped the "Oregon fever." He was teaching in Illinois during the winter of 1844-45. The Oregon question was seething. The boundary line between Great Britain and the United States was still in dispute. Congress persisted in dilatory tactics which threatened a loss of the Columbia and the shores of the Pacific.

Imaginations of the day painted a vivid picture. \* \* On the banks of the Columbia, within fortified walls dwelt the Chief Factor of the Hudson's Bay Company, Dr. John McLoughlin, whose flowing white locks and imposing stature, as well as his lordly manner, awed the savage heart of the Indian. Dr. John McLoughlin, representative of a powerful British monopoly, able by a lift of the finger to hinder any movement of the few American settlers toward development of trade or natural resources. To incur his displeasure might precipitate an international conflict which would doubtless be the signal for an Indian uprising and massacre of the Americans. . . .

Opposing the Hudson's Bay Company was what? Memorials to Congress etched that picture . . . "an infant colony—praying for the high privilege of American citizenship" . . . "struggling to develop a provisional



Birch chest which John Lyle brought across the plains. The brass fittings were added later.



government in a land without the protection afforded by law."

Jason Lee and Marcus Whitman had ridden across the continent pleading for "more men, men and American institutions" to make Oregon "American and Protestant" rather than "British and Catholic." "Oregon and Texas" had been the campaign cry of 1844. Oregon offered an appeal to every spirit—adventurer, trapper, fighter, zealot, patriot.

Amos Harvey asked if Lyle would accompany him to Oregon and drive a second wagon. Lyle accepted. They prepared to start in the spring of 1845.

John Lyle was not at heart a frontiersman. He loved the formalities of dress and of living. He was thirty, unmarried and heart-whole—free to go and free to return. A farewell letter to his sister and his brothers with whom he held in common a paternal estate in Tennessee, a letter to his uncle John Eakin and he was ready to pack his traveling chest. What did he need? First of all, a sturdy saddle horse, a good gun and a sharp knife. Then into the strong birch chest went an inkwell and quills, a small Bible, a dictionary and as many other books as space would permit—some old favorites and some school-books.

There are men and women still living who speak reverently of the few worn leather bound volumes carried in that chest. To pioneer children they unlocked the lore of the past and revealed the world of literature. Simple toilet articles, changes of clothing and boots, white shirts, ties, several fancy waistcoats, filled the chest. John Lyle was ready to wind his watch, put money in his wallet, a pipe in his pocket and be off on the hazardous journey across the "great American desert."

A parting friend presented him with a letter of introduction to Miss Ellen Scott. Her father, Felix Scott, who was a prosperous man and had risen to political prominence in Missouri had been preparing for a year

to take his family to the Oregon country. Perhaps, suggested the friend, Lyle would meet Miss Scott on the plains. If not, he must be sure to find her in Oregon. Lyle smiled at the pretty name—Ellen Scott—and tucked the neat, handfolded envelope into his wallet—nor guessed that it had been inscribed by the hand of destiny.

It was by the Platte that the two wagon trains encamped and Ellen Scott and John Lyle met. She was twenty—as free from care as he—the journey to her a long galaday. Hearts were young and eyes were bright and there were merry hours around the campfires at night within the barricade of covered wagons, beneath the starry, open skies. There was dawn, and noon, and twilight in which to talk of adventure and dangers braved and of the high sweet hopes that were winging toward the land of the setting sun. Love came then as now with roseate promise.

Ellen Scott was one of a family of fair people, tall and of dignified presence. On the way to Oregon were Felix Scott, his wife, Ellen, three daughters, Ellen, Harriet and Juliet, and the sons, Felix, Junior, Marion, Nimrod and Rodney. The father was a Virginian by birth but was driven by tireless energy to seek adventure. Felix, Junior, and Marion like their father became known in pioneer days for generous initiative and intrepid spirits. In 1850 Felix, a lad in the early twenties, was sent by his father from Oregon across the plains with bags of gold dust from the California mines with which to purchase horses and cattle of good stock in Missouri. He accomplished the journey and, accompanied by relatives, returned with one of the first importations of livestock brought across the plains. In 1862 he opened a wagon road across the McKenzie Pass, a feat regarded as impossible even by expert teamsters who had swung their wagons across the Rockies. The achievement is commemorated at McKenzie Bridge by a stone bearing a bronze memorial tablet. Rodney was several times a

member of the Oregon legislature, county judge of Lane County, and Regent of the State University. In the same pioneer company were Eugene Skinner and family, for whom the town of Eugene is named.

The trains met once again before the Scotts turned off at Fort Hall for a winter in California. Ellen and John parted with the promise of meeting the next summer in Oregon.

Through spring and summer and autumn John Lyle with his wagon climbed the mountains and forded the rivers on the long journey. The swing down the Columbia on rafts brought him face to face with Dr. John McLoughlin "autocrat of the Columbia." Lyle marvelling at what he saw and found no explanation. Dr. McLoughlin, protector of British interests on the Pacific, at the cost of his own position, was furnishing food and shelter to needy American immigrants, advancing necessary supplies and trusting without security to payment when the first crops came in. No man, British or American could fathom the workings of McLoughlin's mind in those days. So all, to some extent, distrusted him.

Almost immediately Lyle opened a school at the residence of Colonel Nathaniel Ford who had come to Oregon the preceding year and located upon a donation land claim near the settlement now known as Rickreall but long known as Dixie. He had built a double log cabin with a fireplace at each end and generously gave the use of one room for the first school in Polk County, taught by John E. Lyle during the winter of 1845-46.

Lyle boarded with Colonel Ford and in so doing stepped into the niceties of living that he enjoyed. The Fords represented pioneering "de luxe". Not only were they charming and cultivated people but they had brought with them negroes, Scott, Robbin and Polly, and their children, who had their own cabins and performed the farm and household labor. It was a happy winter for Lyle. Mrs. Ford and her daughters were dainty women.

The two older daughters, Josephine and Mary Ann had attended "The Female Seminary" at Columbia, Missouri. Young Marcus Ford had attended Bacon College, at Harrodsburg, Kentucky, and in Oregon was reading law. Colonel Ford was surveying and assisting in locating land claims for incoming pioneers and so collected and brought home the news of the valley and the latest word from "the States."

Miss Caroline Burch, granddaughter of Nathaniel Ford, has given a copy of the following letter which reveals some of the interests of the period:

Judge Nesmith:

Vale of the Rickreall,  
June 15, '45.

Dear Sir:

I send you by my father "*Chitty on Contracts*" which you can retain if you wish to—until next fall. I sent you "*Mansfields' Political Grammar*" some two weeks ago—by Mr. Saxson.

Genl. Gilliam and myself purpose taking an elk hunt sometime in the last days of July—and I would be glad that you would join us.

I neglected to write until my father was to start and I am, consequently, compelled to forego the pleasure of writing you a lengthy letter.

Very respectfully,

Your friend,

M. A. Ford.

The beautiful little valley charmed travel worn settlers and claims were early located along the banks of the creek from the foothills of the Coast Mountains to the Willamette. On one side of Nathaniel Ford, Carey Embree had located, on the other side was David Goff, beyond him Joshua Shaw. To the west smoke rose from the cabins of Cornelius Gilliam and Mitchell Gilliam, of Benjamin Nichols and Frank Nichols. A mile or two beyond them James A. O'Neil was operating a grist mill he had erected during the winter of 1844-45.

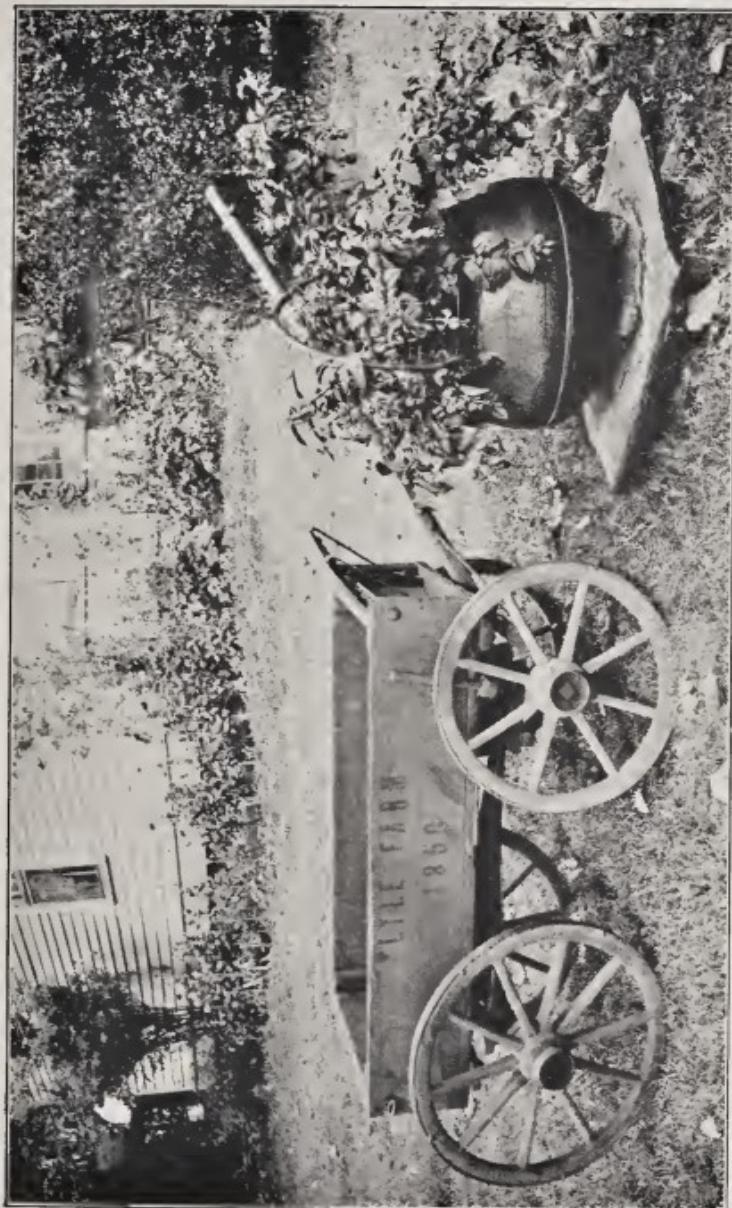




Fireplace in the living room of Lyle house. Brass candlesticks, chairs and counterpane were used in the log cabin.



Fireplace in old parlor of Lyle house. The crib was made in 1859.  
Chair and bellows used in log cabin



Little wagon which John Lyle had made for his children in 1858. In payment he gave a cow. The stone is a part of doorway of the log cabin. The iron kettle was used in housekeeping.



Children came from neighboring settlements to attend the school and boarded with families near Colonel Ford. The Applegate children came from Salt Creek where Jesse, Lindsay and Charles Applegate had located. Among the pupils was little Mary Embree who many years ago became Mrs. Thomas Hayter. She gives the list of "scholars" as she today (1925) recalls them:

Sarah and Caroline Ford.  
Mary and Thomas Embree  
Amanda Tharp  
Caroline and Pauline Goff  
Ann and John Howard  
Gertrude Applegate and two Applegate boys.

For the next term she adds Martha Howard, Miller Ford, three Blevens children and three Beagle children.

On February 5th, 1846, there was published at Oregon City the first issue of the "Oregon Spectator" which was the first newspaper published in American Territory west of the Rocky Mountains. In the issue of March 19, 1846, is found the following notice:

#### JEFFERSON INSTITUTE

Is located in the Rickreall Valley, one mile west of the residence of Col. N. Ford. The first session of this school will commence on the second Monday of next April and continue twenty-four weeks. Scholars from a distance can be accommodated with boarding in the neighborhood.

Terms of tuition, \$8.00 per scholar.

N. Ford

James Howard

John E. Lyle

William Beagle

Teacher

Trustees

March 7, 1846

The name "Jefferson Institute" would lead us to believe that the intention was to establish a permanent school of high grade. An interesting point—a real joker—is the use of "Rickreall" in a notice signed by John

Lyle for he soon became convinced that "La Creole" was the original and correct form. The subject is as near a feud as the Southerners on the creek ever developed and to this day perenially flares up and waxes hot in the summer months. The two camps are represented by the descendants of Nathaniel Ford and by those of John Lyle. Both sides have numerous adherents and considerable data. With this explanation, the writer, being a loyal descendant of John Lyle and having been twice forced by the exigencies of historical accuracy to inscribe the distasteful word "Rickreall" will henceforth ignore it and refer to the loved stream as "La Creole."

Jefferson Institute was a log cabin erected for the purpose on the land claim of Carey Embree. It is to Mary Embree (Mrs. Hayter) that we must go for details of the school. Benches made of long planks were placed along the walls and the children sat facing the wall, using for a desk a puncheon, a wide board, set on props against the wall. Pens were made of sharpened goose quills, many kept in readiness by Mr. Lyle. The first pencils were lead bullets hammered flat and long. Ink was made by squeezing the juice from oak balls and letting it stand on iron filings. The writing paper was blue and probably purchased of the Hudson's Bay Company. The pioneers had brought school books. Carey Embree brought enough to keep his children advancing for three years. The Bible was read in the morning, each child reading a verse. There was a lunch period, also recess, during which the boys played ball with knitted balls on one side of the house while on the other side the girls jumped the rope with ropes made of braided rawhide.

A pulpit was placed in Jefferson Institute. The cabin was used for church and for all general gatherings. Lyle was a Presbyterian. Denominational differences were ignored and missionaries of all churches were welcomed. MacWaller preached there, as did John Boone and Glen

Be it remembered that at a term of the District Court of the United States in and for the County of Polk, being territory of Oregon, begun and helden last & past year in said County, on the second Monday of April, the same being the tenth day of April, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and fifty five, there were present the:

Wm. A. Pratt, District Judge  
Joseph L. Black Esq., Marshal  
John E. Lyle Esq., Clerk

Whereupon the following proceedings were had, that is to say, the Term directed upon for a Grand Jury having been returned into Court served. There appeared for such service and answered to their names the following persons, to wit:

John E. Conner, John S. Berry, Joseph Cornick, Peter William, A. F. Clark, Samuel Gardner, Daniel Williams, J. B. Burden, Sherman A. Elkins, William Connor, John Nichols, James H. Frederick, David Grant, Harrison French, T. C. B. Shaw, Henry Hayes, James Warr, Alexander McCay, Isaac Lewis, W. P. Koch, and William Cooper; after which the Court ordered the Sheriff to summon a sufficient number of persons from the bystanders or other men to complete the panel, and the sheriff having summoned William C. Brown who appearing for that purpose, the said jury were sworn in the court, were then impaneled.

Fac-simile of court record in handwriting of John E. Lyle.



O. Burnett. People came from miles away and through the Sabbath morning could be heard the men's voices urging their ox-teams as they approached the Institute. Hospitable cabins welcomed the arrivals and happy hours of visiting followed the religious service before the slow moving oxen were turned homeward.

In summer additional shelter for the congregation was provided by setting forked tree limbs upright across the front of the building and covering them with fir boughs. The young girls sometimes decorated the room, filling the fireplace with greens and inserting yew boughs along the log walls. When they had finished, says Mrs. Hayter, they carefully swept the litter from the doorway with branches of snowberry.

Court, too, was held in Jefferson Institute during that year. The provisional county circuit court was convened on September 6, 1846. On a high steel shelf in the vault of the Polk County Court House at Dallas lies a worn volume that bears on time yellowed leaves the clear and legible record of the first circuit court of Polk County. In some providential way these records escaped when the court house burned in 1898. On the first page of the old record is written:

"Be it remembered that, at a circuit court, begun and held at the Jefferson Institute, within and for the county of Polk, on the first Monday in September, it being the sixth, A. D. 1846, when were present the Hon. A. A. Skinner, judge of the Circuit Court Oregon Territory, and Benj. F. Nichols, sheriff of said county. When the court was opened in due form of law by the sheriff the court ascertained that no venire for grand jury had been issued, also that the office of the clerk of the county court was vacant, proceeded to the appointment of J. E. Lyle, clerk pro tem of the circuit court for Polk County and the oath of office was administered to him. There being no prosecuting attorney present and the members of the bar present refusing to act pro tem the court proceeded to the business of the docket."

Lyle's records are a clearly written and plain exposition of the court proceedings. He was clerk "pro tem" both of the provisional court and the later district court—"pro tem" for John Lyle was a Whig in a county of Democrats and voted the Whig ticket, it is said, when but one other man in the county voted it with him.

In June '46 Felix Scott and family came with pack and saddle horses through southern Oregon from Sutters Fort in California. They came saddened by the recent death of Harriet. They went to the Joseph Watt home near Amity. The June air was sweet with the fragrance of wild roses and of the wild orange blossoms and the strawberries reddened on sunny hills when John Lyle and Ellen Scott met again. Before the leaves had turned to gold their wedding day was set. They were married November 3rd, 1846, by Glen O. Burnett at the home of Joseph Watt where Felix Scott was then living. Ellen and John mounted their horses and rode through the bright November sunshine to the Ramage neighborhood where he taught a short term of school. During the winter they returned to Jefferson Institute where a cabin near the school had been built for them. Mrs. Scott had kept darkies busy at the looms for a year before she came to Oregon and brought bolts of linen cloth, tablecloths and sheets. So Ellen Lyle was well supplied with linen, had a dozen dresses and a feather bed and pillows for housekeeping. Each of her granddaughters has today a square of one of the first hand woven tablecloths. Ellen was not the only bride on the creek. Josephine Ford had married Dr. James W. Boyle on May 12, '46, and Pauline Goff had married James Nesmith in June of the same year.

The supply of dishes and cooking utensils was very limited until after '49. Older housekeepers had managed to tuck dishes into feather beds and bring them safely across the plains but the first brides had rather sorry looking tables. A Dutch oven, a three legged skillet, a crane and kettle over good oak coals could broil grouse



Bits of stone in the oak woods on Lyle Farm marking the location of a store in 1847.







A copy of a picture purchased by Colonel Gilliam at a store located on Lyle Farm in 1847.



THE EVENING PRAYER.

A copy of a picture purchased at a store located on Lyle Farm in 1847.



or venison, roast potatoes, boil wheat, brown hominy, bake salt rising and gingerbread, what more could one desire? However plain the fare might be the latchstring was always out.

Carey Embree presented Ellen Lyle with her first broom of broom corn, grown in his garden and made into a broom by his own skilful hands. She had been using one of those in general use—made of a hazel stick finely split and peeled back and bound together with buckskin and sinew, making a strong, coarse broom. Carey Embree had a famous garden in the lowlands by the creek. Eagerly accepted were his long handled dipper gourds. John Lyle had a fine garden there, too, and Ellen raised the fragrant "pocket melons" that the women loved to carry in their reticules. There were school and church and court and kindly neighbors and Ellen and John were so content that when they rode up through the valley and found that Mitchell Gilliam had decided to sell the rights to his claim they took it. A portion of that claim is the "Lyle Farm" now owned by Harriet Lyle Veazie, daughter of John Lyle and Ellen.

It must have been about this time that a store was located on that land, said to have been opened by a man named Moran. Bits of stone from the chimney still lie on a little mound in the oak woods marking where the old territorial road wound by.

The only articles in existence known to have been purchased at the store are two pictures treasured by Mrs. Frank Collins (Elizabeth Gilliam). She tells that her father, Colonel Cornelius Gilliam, took her and her sister Retta to the store. The little girls saw the pictures and were so captivated that Colonel Gilliam purchased for one the "Morning Prayer" and for the other the "Evening Prayer." The two little girls looked solemnly into each others eyes and vowed to treasure the pictures as long as life should last and that the first to die should leave hers to the other. The two have long hung on Elizabeth's walls.

"Simple days," says this generation. Recall for a moment the year of 1847 in the Oregon Territory. The Indians as they saw more and more land claimed by the whites were becoming sullen and threatening. The boundary line was settled but no United States government provided and no recognition of legislative or judicial acts of the Provisional Government. Anxiety over land titles was becoming acute. The man who had braved the hardships of the journey across the plains to win the "square mile of land" wanted to be assured of a title. There were not troops and supplies for military defense. It was not pleasing to remember that if trouble came all munitions of war were to be found in the storehouses of the Hudson's Bay Company at Vancouver where James Douglas, now Chief Factor, acted under strict and explicit orders from London. War with the Mexicans was in progress in California. There had been no effort to improve or even mark a road from the western states to Oregon. There was not even a provision for transportation of mail across the continent. The isolation was becoming intolerable. November 29, 1847, was the day of the Whitman massacre. Then horror, fear of the Indians, suspicion of the Catholic priests, distrust of the British and burning humiliation over the indifference of the United States!

Jefferson Institute was used as a recruiting station for troops to be sent against the Cayuses. There was no panic. School was held, court convened. Men and women looked calmly into the eyes of the Indians who came and went and watched. The women smiled and tended their little flower gardens of hollyhocks and love apples, of French pinks and feverfew and turned with grave and anxious eyes to the medicinal beds of peppermint and catnip, of sage and tansy and hoarhound. They smiled but listened always day and night for the sound of a horse's hoof-beats that might herald the arrival of a messenger from the fighting volunteers.



Chair made in 1846, by Felix Scott, from an ox bow and yoke used  
in crossing the plains.



Amid these conditions Harriet Jane Lyle was born, in September, 1847, in the cabin near Jefferson Institute. When she was a few weeks old, Ellen Lyle mounted a horse, took her infant daughter on her knee and rode to her father's home at Amity. On the return journey she bore a little chair on her foot.

During the first winter in Oregon Felix Scott, Senior, had whiled away the dark days by fashioning a little chair out of an oxbow and yoke that he had used in crossing the plains. The rawhide seat he made of the hide of a cow that had died on the plains. He designed the chair for his tiny daughter, Linn, but it failed to please her capricious fancy, so he presented it to his infant granddaughter, Harriet Lyle. The little chair has had almost constant use from that day to this and is still one of the treasures of Lyle Farm.

Gold was discovered in California in 1847. The rush to the gold fields was at its height in '48. It seems incredible that the women of the valley who had lived in daily dread since the Whitman massacre should consent to have the men leave, for any amount of gold. But they did. Many claims were held by women and young boys and little children. John Lyle was gone a few months and brought back \$1000 in gold. Soon after his return a second daughter, Joan, was born. He taught in the Applegate settlement and then at La Fayette with young Matthew P. Deady as assistant.

It was during these years that John Lyle knew a spiritual temptation—perhaps a new impulse stirred by Jesse Applegate's convincing logic, perhaps a fruition of those impulses that had primarily led him to Oregon. There is evidence that Oregon held for many minds a mystic attraction as a land of social regeneration. Horace S. Lyman in his history of Oregon says:

"Interest in Oregon as a field for establishing society upon a new and wider plan, without the evils of older communities, continued to attract hither young men of good education and idealistic minds."

Dreams of Utopia were not new. They have been recorded since the days of Plato's Republic. Perhaps there is no finer monument to ideal democracy than the establishment of the provisional government of Oregon —a government self-imposed—by subtlest diplomacy winning the "consent of all the governed", composed of factions whose interests were diametrically opposed —American and British, Catholic and Protestant. Conditions following the discovery of gold seemed to early settlers to have permanently altered the trend of thought in the Willamette Valley. When Jesse Applegate, man of practical initiative and sane judgment, proposed to a chosen few the establishment of a social colony in southern Oregon for themselves and their families, the men listened eagerly and with growing enthusiasm. Far into the night, said Ellen Lyle in later years, the men would sit and talk and plan. The young wives talked, too, of the sacrifices of their first married years, of their babes, of the future and said that they would not go! Jesse Applegate went and became known as the "Sage of Yoncalla."

Oregon was recognized as a territory, donation land rights were upheld, and on August 20th, 1850, Ellen Lyle mounted her horse and took Joan in her arms and John Lyle mounted her horse with Harriet on before and they turned toward the claim they had taken but never occupied. Beneath the blue summer sky, through the tall wild grass that brushed their ankles, they rode to the home on La Creole. It was a lovely site, near the foot-hills of the purple Coast mountains, with snow peaks rising from the Cascades toward the east. Along the sparkling creek were great trees, the maple, the fir, the alder, the balm of Gilead.

Here and there on the highland were splendid oaks. "It was like a beautiful park," said Ellen, "quite free from underbrush." They used the log cabin that Mitchell Gilliam had erected and added to it as need demanded, bedrooms, a dining room, porches.





Trees which bore fruit in 1856



Balm of Gilead tree which stands near where the old territorial road passed.



An agent for "Luellings Traveling Nursery" came by and Lyle took a number of fruit trees. That they flourished is evidenced by an entry in an old ledger used by W. C. Brown in his pioneer store. The entry is dated October 25, 1856. John Lyle is credited with three bushels of apples at \$24.00.

The aged trees today blossom bravely and in the spring the old orchard is sweet with the fragrance of the flowering cherry, the plum, the pear and the apple. For more than seventy years those trees have fulfilled the cycle of bud and bloom, of ripened fruit and yellowed leaf. There one finds old favorites, the Golden Sweet, Gloria Mundi, Rambeau, Red June, Sweet June, the Damson Plum, the summer pear, the gourd pear, the pound pear, the Concord grape.

An old record relates that on May 9, 1851, a meeting of the county court was held at the residence of John E. Lyle, north of La Creole, and the members of that court were Harrison Linville, David R. Lewis and Thos. J. Lovelady; H. M. Waller was county clerk. At that meeting it was ordered that a court house two stories high be erected at Cynthian, (located where North Dallas now stands). The county donation square on which the court house was located is shown in the plat of the John E. Lyle homestead.

That the court house was promptly completed we find in the first circuit court record.

"Term of District Court of the United States in and for the County of Polk and Territory of Oregon began and holden at the court house in Cynthian —— on the first Monday of October, the same being the sixth day of October, in the year of our Lord, one thousand eight hundred and fifty-one."

The next public service on record in which Lyle was concerned was the establishment of La Creole Academic Institute. A glance through the records beginning February 5, 1855, reveals that it was a far-seeing project. The name Dallas had at the time replaced "Cynthian."

Water, however, could not be secured on the site and the more progressive landholders, determined to keep the sessions of the county court in their locality, adroitly managed a new townsite, while they endowed the Academic Institute. The minutes are signed by Horace Lyman, Secretary.

"The meeting called for the purpose of establishing an Academy at or near Dallas was held pursuant to call at the Court House and came to order by choosing Mr. Harvy to the chair, H. Lyman, Secretary." Trustees elected were R. P. Boise, N. Lee, Wm. Lewis, J. F. Roberts, J. E. Lyle, F. Waymire, A. H. Sweeney, J. M. Frederick and Horace Lyman. The trustees were to draft a charter, select a location and report at the next meeting. It was decided at this meeting that "the provisions of the charter be made such as to leave with the teacher at the time employed, whether or not the exercises of morning and evening prayer should be had."

R. P. Boise was elected president of the Board of Trustees, plans were presented for the building and each trustee was requested to act as a solicitor to obtain funds for the Institute. F. Waymire made "the offer of twenty acres on the south side of La Creole" for S. Shelton, which offer was subsequently raised to twenty-five acres upon the offer of J. E. Lyle and W. Lewis to donate 40 acres each should the Institute be located on the south side of the creek." (Old Dallas was on the north side).

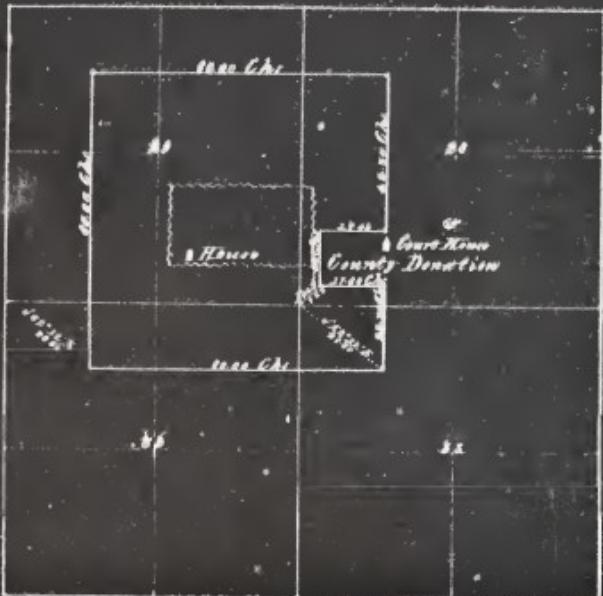
Under date of July 12, 1855, we are told that the "Trustees proceeded to the Seminary grounds to lay them out." "Upon measuring them it was found that the ground donated owing to the withdrawal of Mr. Levens was insufficient, however laid out to be of much immediate service." "The day wore away" without a decision and the trustees adjourned until 8 o'clock the next morning.

The next morning the trustees met and had evidently done effective work over night. "Present were R. P. Boise, H. Lyman, J. E. Lyle, W. R. Lewis, and Nicolas

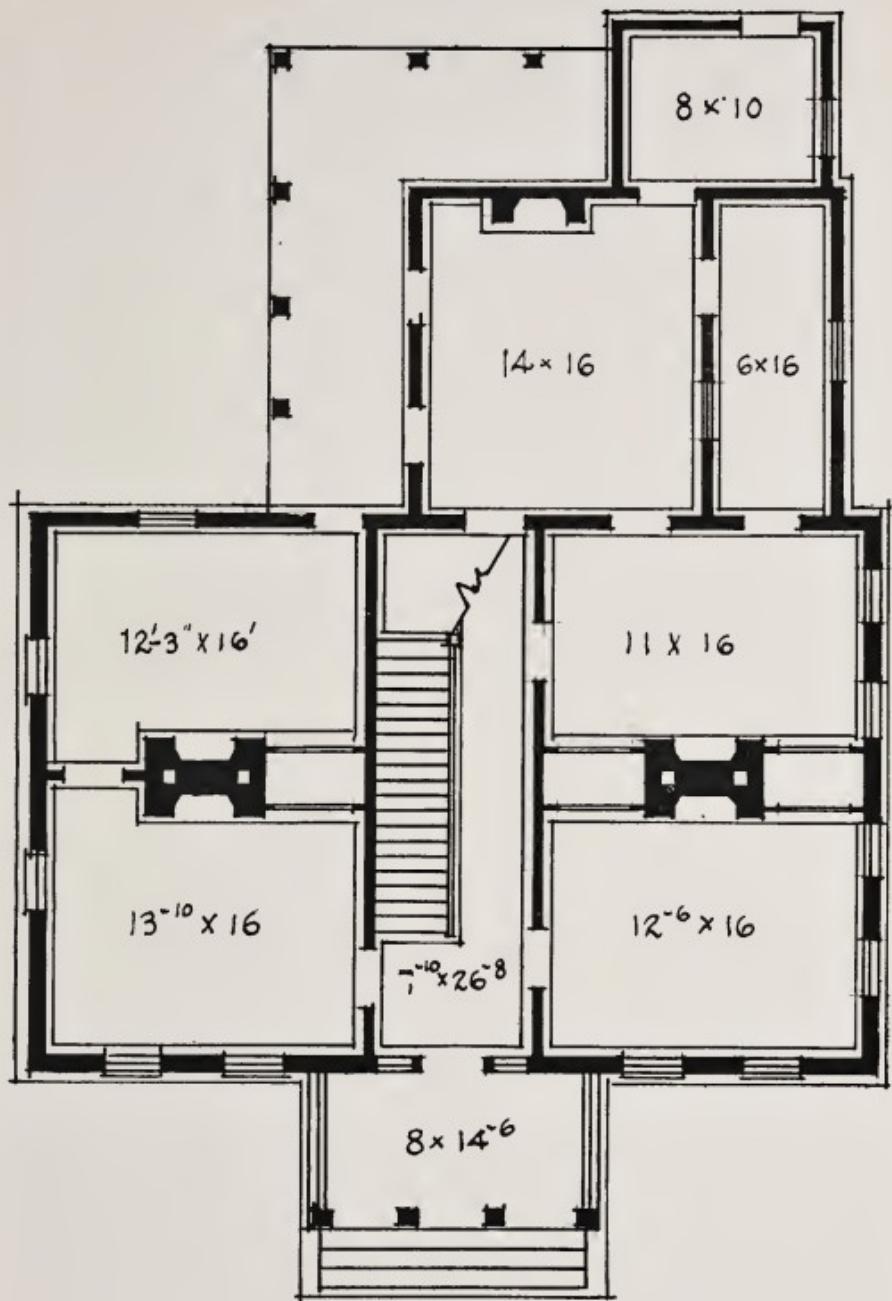


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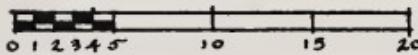
Plat & Notes of the Lyle's claim



Photographic copy furnished by the General Land Office,  
Washington, D. C.



SCALE FOR PLAN





Lee—a quorum.” Lewis raised his donation to 40 acres, Shelton raised his to 32 acres and Lyle still offered the original 40 acres. Others had subscribed money. Deeds were made, the trustees “fixed upon the spot where to place the building, laying off twenty-four rods square for the Academy grounds, and laying off a street of eighty feet all around, with lots one hundred by one hundred and fifty feet bordering, the several deeds were all signed, acknowledged and delivered.”

Not only was “La Creole Academic Institute” located and endowed with land but a site for Dallas fixed. Lots facing the Academy square were offered for sale at \$100 each. A little later it was considered expedient to donate lots “to certain individuals such as merchant, taverner, blacksmith, cabinet maker and the like” provided they would “commence building early next season.”

The first teacher of La Creole Academic Institute was the Reverend Horace Lyman with Miss Elizabeth Boise as assistant. Horace Lyman graduated from Williams College in 1842 and from Andover State Seminary in 1846. The tuition charged “was \$4 for Reading and Spelling, \$5 for all higher branches usually taught in Common or Free Schools and \$8 for the higher English studies and the Languages.” July 6, 1857, the trustees donated a square to the county upon which in 1859 a court house was erected.

At this time John Lyle began to see within his reach the house of his dream, the spacious home which should adorn a sightly spot on the highland back from the creek. Little by little he and Ellen had saved toward it but now the herds were large and thriving and the top drawer in the mahogany chest of drawers was almost full of gold coin. They had spent happy years in the log cabin and it was a cosy place. There was a little cook stove in the kitchen and in the family room a fire place where oak fires glowed with bellows and hand wrought poker and tongs and shovel at hand; the big clock and gleaming

brass candlesticks on the shelf above. There were a mahogany table and mirror, rawhide seated and wooden Winsor chairs about the room. Many friends crossed that flat stone doorstep, neighbors, attorneys and judges who came to court and travelers going to and from the Nesmith-Owens grist mill at Ellendale.

The contract for the house still standing at Lyle Farm was let to William Pitman in 1858. He was also the architect.

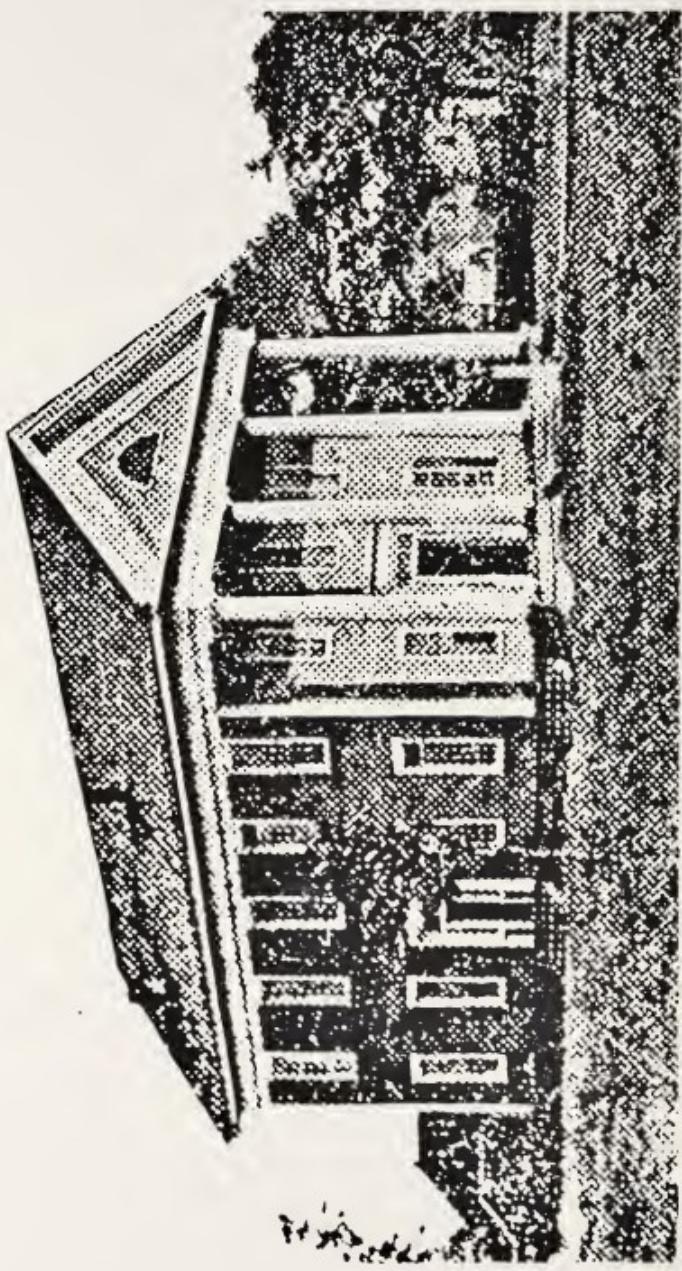
The Lyle residence is a typical New England house, symmetrical in plan and elevation, with a stair hall as the central axis—a characteristic early form. In accepting the plan John and Ellen Lyle were forced by pioneer conditions to forego an expressed predilection for the southern type of residence with kitchen and servants' quarters separated from the main dwelling. The house was erected evidently on the verge of the change from the classic to the romantic period in American architecture as shown by the steep gable. That the house belongs to the colonial family is shown in details both exterior and interior which follow classical forms traceable to colonial influence. The porch columns, the cornice and the fireplace details correspond to the Roman tradition which is the foundation of colonial forms. There are four fireplaces.

The correspondence is shown in the enframement of the fireplaces with a classic pilaster supporting an architrave and projecting cornice, which, of course, in simple terms, becomes the shelf.

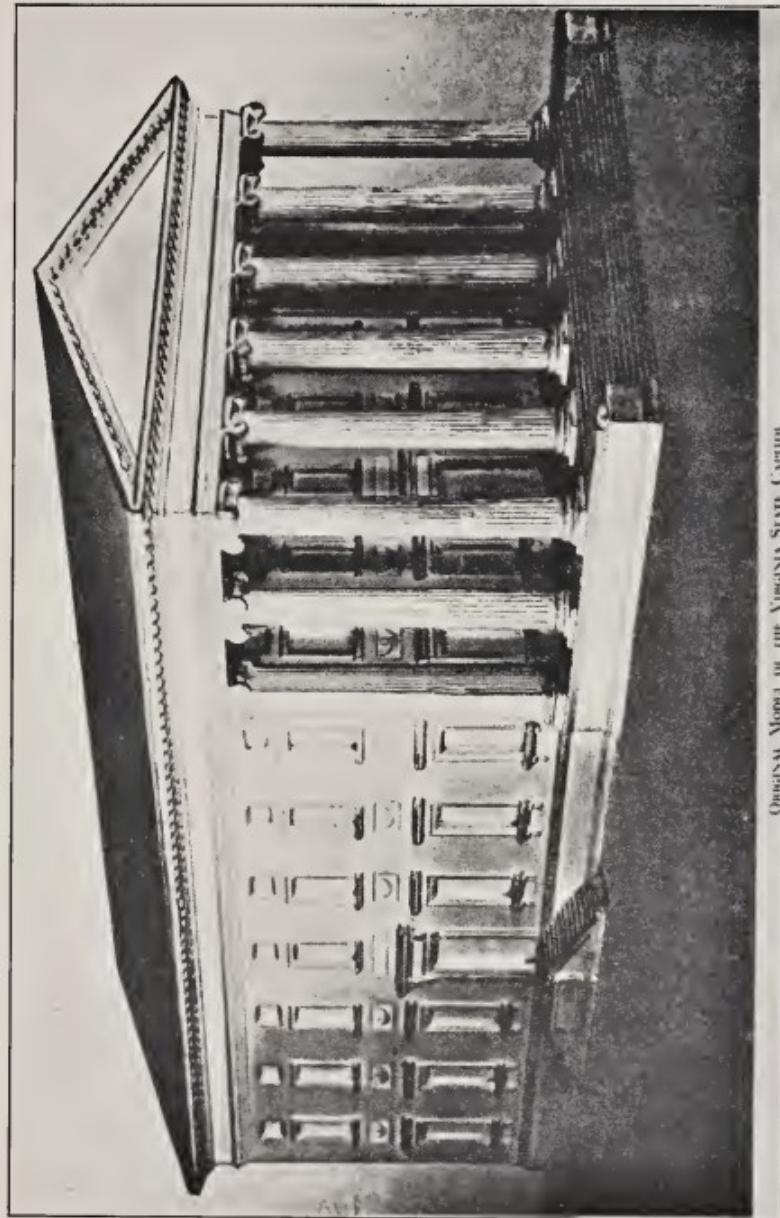
The roof reveals the beginning of the romantic influence, expressed in the steep gable ends. The house is now as in 1858 of distinguished appearance.

There was not, said J. M. Campbell, one of the carpenters, a planer mark on the whole house, flooring, ceiling, etc., all being dressed by hand. Moldings, cornice and balustrades were all made by hand. The front door has the position of the lock reversed—the keyhole upside down. The key is six inches long.





Courthouse erected at Dallas, Polk County, in 1859.



UNIVERSAL MONUMENTS ON THE VIRGINIA STATE CAPITOL

(Reproduced from the *Journal of the American Institute of Architects*.—Sept. MCMXV.)



In 1859 a new court house was erected on the square donated by the trustees of the Academy and Dallas was entrenched as a county seat.

The contract was let to William Pitman, the price fixed at \$7,400. Upon completion the new edifice was regarded as one of the finest buildings in the state. In architecture it is interesting.

It reveals distinct southern ancestry. Thomas Jefferson's influence is marked in the severe Roman classic lines. Indeed, comparing the court house with the original model of the Virginia State Capitol—sponsored by Jefferson and said to be the first monument of the classical revival in American architecture—it is seen at once that Dallas had in 1859 a reproduction of that model prepared in 1789.

The angle of the roof is a little sharper in the court house than in the Capitol at Richmond—the columns are of the Doric instead of the Ionic order. The tympanum is an almost exact reproduction of the Roman temple, peculiarly appropriate to the South as it gives a shadow. The architecture of the Capitol is inspired by the Maison Carrée of Nismes, which Jefferson described in a letter to Madison as "one of the most beautiful, if not the most beautiful and precious morsel left us by antiquity." Of the Capitol building he said:

<sup>1</sup>"It is very simple but is noble beyond expression and would have done honor to any country, as presenting to travelers a specimen of taste in our infancy, promising much for our mature years." The buildings of the University of Virginia belong to the same period of revival of interest in Roman architecture.

The old Academy was not so fortunate in an architect. It follows no tradition. It is merely a belfried school house.

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<sup>1</sup>Bergh, Vol 5. Quoted by the Journal of the American Institute of Architects, September MCMXV.

In '59 the Lyles were happily settled in the new house, the young trees were growing and flowers blossomed beneath the windows. The older children attended La Creole Academy. Seven children had come to John and Ellen: Harriet, Joan, Alonzo, Alfred, Felix Scott, William and Julia. Alonzo, Felix Scott and Julia died in infancy. John Lyle sent the herds of cattle to winter in eastern Oregon. The winter of 1861-62, said to be the worst that Oregon has ever known, devasted the herds he had sent and in order to retrieve the heavy loss he went to the mines in eastern Oregon. He was taken ill almost immediately upon reaching his destination and died there in 1862.

John Lyle was allotted seventeen years in Oregon. He made good use of them. His work has endured. It is sixty-three years since he passed. Great grandchildren play on the hill with the wagon he had made for the amusement of his own children in 1858. The old records lie clean and legible in the worn volume on the court house shelf. The Academy lands and funds still materially aid education. Dallas is dominated by the county square and the wide streets donated in '55. The Mission Rose, the Cloth of Gold, the pink and white Moss Roses that Ellen loved long ago dropped their last petals but the trees grow and year by year fling out greater branches. John Lyle interpreted democracy not as a leveler but as an incentive to each man to be as fine and aristocratic as he chose.

